

Emergency Support Function #4 Firefighting

Primary District Agency: DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department

Support District Agencies: Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Department of Health
Department of Human Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Public Works
Emergency Management Agency
Metropolitan Police Department
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Water and Sewer Authority

Non-Governmental Organizations:

Potomac Electric Power Company
Washington Gas Company

Lead Federal Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

ESF #4—Firefighting supports DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (DCFEMS) with the response and suppression of urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, a public emergency in an extraordinary situation.

B. Scope

ESF #4 manages and coordinates firefighting activities including search, rescue, containment, suppression, coordination of evacuation in the hazard areas, and delivery of emergency medical services.

II. Policies

- A. Priority will be given to saving lives and protecting property, in that order.
- B. The Incident Command System (ICS) will be implemented to effectively manage and control resources at the scene of emergencies.
- C. The DCFEMS Personal Accountability System will be used to track and control the movement of DCFEMS personnel.
- D. DCFEMS will operate at incidents using standard operating procedures (SOPs). SOPs are predetermined standardized practices that enable the firefighting units to operate in a coordinated and safe manner.

III. Situation

A. Disaster Condition

- 1. The management of a large firefighting operation is complex, often involving dozens of firefighting resources. Fire resulting from, or independent of, but occurring coincidentally with, a public emergency may place extraordinary demands on available resources and logistics support systems.
- 2. A public emergency may result in numerous urban fires. The damage potential from fires in urban areas during and after a public emergency exceeds that of all other causes. Fires may have the potential to spread rapidly, cause extensive damage, and pose a serious threat to life and property. Available firefighting resources may be difficult to obtain and utilize because of massive disruption of communication, transportation, utility, and water systems.

B. Planning Assumptions

- 1. Urban fires may result from a natural disaster. They also may occur as the result of another significant event. Large, damaging fires may be common.
- 2. At the time of a public emergency, there may be fires burning in multiple locations in the District. These fires will draw upon the same resources (engines or other tactical and support resources) that would be needed to support firefighting and other emergency operations. It must be assumed that some firefighting resources will become scarce, resulting in the public emergency-related firefighting operations competing for resources.
- 3. Telephone communications may be interrupted.

4. DCFEMS 800 MHz radio communication may be interrupted in certain situations.
5. Bridge failures, traffic, landslides, damaged road systems, air traffic restrictions, and so forth, may hamper access, making conventional travel to the fire location extremely difficult or impossible.
6. Efficient and effective mutual aid among the various local, state, and federal fire-suppression agencies requires the use of ICS together with compatible firefighting equipment and communications.

IV. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. ESF #4 will manage and coordinate firefighting and fire suppression activities, by mobilizing fire and rescue resources in support of urban firefighting operations. ESF #4 will use established firefighting and support organizations, processes, and procedures. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with Incident Commanders.
2. Requests for firefighting assistance and resources will be coordinated through the DCFEMS Communications Center to the appropriate fire and rescue units.

B. Organization

DCFEMS is an integrated system of firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical units strategically located throughout the city. These units are continually staffed with highly trained firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics. An ICS will be implemented to effectively manage and control resources at the scene of emergencies.

C. Notification

1. In most cases, fires are reported directly to the 911 DCFEMS Communications Center.
2. Upon notification by Emergency Management Agency (EMA) of a potential or actual public emergency requiring response, beyond normal response operations, the fire chief or designee will cause all senior command staff officials to be notified by telephone or pager through the DCFEMS Communications Center.

3. Mutual aid support will generally be requested through the DCFEMS Communications Center and coordinated through EMA when necessary.

D. Response Actions

1. Initial Actions

- a. The ESF #4 Coordinator—a DCFEMS officer with the rank of fire captain or higher who will have a working knowledge of the SOPs, resources, and capabilities of DCFEMS— will do the following:
 - (1) Locate at the EOC within two hours of notification.
 - (2) Establish communication links with primary and/or support agencies.
 - (3) Establish communication links with the Incident Commanders.
 - (4) Establish communications links with the DCFEMS senior command staff.
 - (5) Obtain an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures.
 - (6) Contribute to situation reports.
- b. DCFEMS operations will do the following:
 - (1) Provide command and control of incidents.
 - Institute an incident management system, including unified command as necessary.
 - (2) Provide trained firefighters to the scene.
 - Maintain an adequate on-duty force as first responders.
 - Activate the Department's Mobilization Plan as necessary to call additional personnel.
 - (3) Provide sufficient firefighting apparatus to the scene, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
 - Maintain sufficient front-line fire apparatus for immediate response.
 - (4) Perform search and rescue as necessary, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
 - Provide trained search and rescue personnel to the scene.

- (5) Perform technical rescue as necessary, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
- (6) Provide trained technical rescue personnel with appropriate equipment to the scene, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
- (7) Provide emergency medical technicians and paramedics to the scene with appropriate equipment, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
 - Perform triage and emergency medical treatment as necessary.
- (8) Provide EMS transport units to the scene, as required by immediate firefighting needs.
 - Perform emergency medical transportation as necessary.
 - Maintain sufficient in-service ambulances.
- (9) Determine if evacuations are needed.
 - Direct and coordinate as needed.

2. Continuing Actions

- a. Obtain, maintain, and provide fire situation and damage assessment information through established intelligence procedures.
- b. Determine and resolve, as necessary, issues regarding resource shortages, slow processing, and interagency conflicts.
- c. Maintain close coordination with the support agencies.
- d. Maintain a complete log of actions taken, resource orders, records, and reports.
- e. Document resource expenditures.
- f. Request additional resources as necessary from support agencies, mutual aid providers, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and Federal resources.
- g. Procure and maintain sufficient reserve fire apparatus to enable additional units to be placed in service as required.
- h. Activate mutual aid agreements to ensure additional immediate response if necessary from surrounding jurisdictions.

- i. Procure and maintain an adequate stock of medical supplies.
- j. Activate agreements for emergency resupply as needed.
- k. Activate and maintain sufficient reserve ambulances to enable additional units to be placed in service as required.
- l. Activate mutual aid agreements to enable requests of immediate mutual aid ambulance units.
- m. Perform fire/arson investigation.
- n. Maintain an on-duty investigation team for duration of investigation.

V. Responsibilities

A. Primary District Agency

DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (DCFEMS)—DCFEMS responds to calls from residents, visitors, and organizations in the District. DCFEMS will provide a liaison to the EMA EOC to provide DCFEMS's operations status. The department accomplishes this responsibility through four areas of operations:

- 1. Fire Prevention—preventing fires before they occur.
- 2. Fire Suppression—extinguishing fires that do occur.
- 3. Emergency Medical Services—providing state-of-the-art pre-hospital emergency medical and transport services.
- 4. Support Services—including administration, finance, communication, fleet maintenance, research and development, professional standards, management information and technology services, and departmental training.

B. Support District Agencies

Support agencies will assist at the scene of a fire in accordance with their mission and responsibilities assigned under the DRP.

- 1. **Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)**—DCRA will provide engineers to assess structural damage and provide building plans as available for concerned structures.

2. **Department of Health (DOH)**—DOH will coordinate health and medical assistance in the District as needed in firefighting efforts. This will be done through clinical assessment and management of health care facilities, mental health assistance for those affected, assessment of health and medical needs, and notification to local hospitals for mass medical care activities.
3. **Department of Human Services (DHS)**—DHS will assist in providing for evacuees including food, bedding, supplies, and transportation using contractual services of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross.
4. **Department of Mental Health (DMH)**—DMH will coordinate mental health activities within the District through needs assessment and provision of critical incident stress management (CISM) for first responders and crisis counseling for victims/families and special vulnerable populations.
5. **Department of Public Works (DPW)**—DPW will provide on-site sand and salt for slippery conditions, and refueling as necessary.
6. **Emergency Management Agency (EMA)**—EMA will activate the EOC and require ESFs to staff the Consequence Management Team (CMT) and perform an assessment of the situation through Situation Reports (SITREPS), determining the immediate critical needs and the need for federal assistance. The mobile command van will be dispatched to the scene to gather information on the type of hazardous material involved and other data.
7. **Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)**—MPD will provide site perimeter security, traffic control, staging area security, and assistance with emergency evacuations during and after a fire to protect the health and safety of persons and the integrity of the fire scene. MPD will also perform criminal investigations as necessary.
8. **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)**—OCME will respond to the scene and provide coordination of mass fatality efforts, including investigating, establishing temporary morgue(s), coordinating transportation of remains, performing postmortem examinations and identifications, securing evidence, certifying cause and manner of death, and releasing remains, through ESF #8—Health and Medical Services, Fatality Management.
9. **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**—WMATA will respond with DCFEMS to any incident involving Metro property; provide backup resources when District agency resources, personnel, and equipment must be supplemented in response to an incident

that impacts Metro property; and provide Metro buses, as needed, for evacuating the population.

10. **Water and Sewer Authority (WASA)**—WASA will ensure that adequate water supply is maintained to support firefighting efforts, and increase area pressure if required.
11. **Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)**—PEPCO will provide an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to address electric power utility disconnects as necessary.
12. **Washington Gas Company (WGC)**—WGC will provide an ERT to address natural gas utility disconnects as necessary.

C. Lead Federal Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USDA)—USDA is the lead federal agency for ESF #4 and will provide direct, technical, and other support to the District through ESF #4.

Upon the declaration of an emergency or major disaster by the President under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act as Amended, April 1999, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal departments and agencies will implement the Federal Response Plan (FRP). Initially, these agencies will operate out of the FEMA Regional Operations Center (ROC). Later, when the Disaster Field Office (DFO) is established near the disaster area, the agency ESF representatives that comprise the ERT will be in the DFO.